

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 14095 020934Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10
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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 14095

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT EG
SUBJECT: REFERENDUM AFTERMATH

SUMMARY: MOHIE EL DIN'S IMMUNITY LIFTED BUT
AL AHALI APPEARS ON NEWS STANDS. NEW PRESS LAW TO BE
INTRODUCED GIVING ASULARGE DEGREE OF CONTROL. THREE
WAFDIST PARLIAMENTARIANS RESIGN. SOCIALIST'S
PROSECUTOR ROLE REMAINS UNCLEAR. FOREIGN PRESS CRITICISM
OF REPRESSIVE MOVES MAY LIMIT EXTENT TO WHICH THIS
IMPOSED. END SUMMARY.

1. IMMUNITY LIFTED. PEOPLES ASSEMBLY LEGISLATIVE COM-
MITTEE MAY 30 LIFTED LEFT PARTY HEAD KHALID MOHIE
EL DIN'S PARLIAMENTARY IMMUNITY TOALLOW MININFOAL SAWI'S
LIBEL SUIT GO FORWARD. MOHIE EL DIN REPORTEDLY AGREED TO
LIFTING SO LONG AS IT CONFINED TO THIS INCIDENT ONLY.

2. AL AHALI. AL AHALI APEARED ON NEWSSTANDS MAY 31.
ENTIRE ISSUE DEVOTED TO "HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION":
FIRST THREE PAGES REPRINTED PARTY PLATFORM; REMAINDER
COVERED KHALID MOHIE EL DIN'S PA ADDRESS ON TAXATION.
LEFT MESSAGE ON CURRENT EVENTS CONVEYED THROUGH HEADLINE:
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 14095 020934Z

"REAL DEMOCRACY PRESUPPOSES FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, ASSEM-
BLY, ORGANIZATION AND STRIKING..." (IN PREVIOUS DAY'S
PRESS CONFERENCE, SADAT SAID AL AHALI WOULD NOT BE
CLOSED DOWN, ALTHOUGH HE INDICATED GOVERNMENT WILL LOOK
AT EACH EDITION CLOSELY).

3. PRESS AND FREEDOM. IN UNRELATED INTERVIEW, AL SAWI

ASSURED REPORTERS FREEDOM OF PRESS NOT ENDANGERED. SAID CURRENT ACTIVITIES GEARED TO "PROTECTING" FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION FROM ATHEISTS AND MARXISTS. MINISTER NOTED COMMITTEE BEING FORMED TO DRAFT NEW PRESS LAW WHICH WILL REQUIRE PAPERS TO GIVE ASU 49 OR 51 PERCENT CONTROL (PAPERS DIFFER ON AMOUNT CONTROL REQUIRED). FROM CONTEXT AL SAWI REMARKS, IT APPEARS POLITICAL PARTIES' PAPERS MAY BE EXEMPT FROM THIS REQUIREMENT.

4. WAFD RESIGNATIONS. THREE PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM FAYYUM RESIGNED FROM WAFD INMESSAGE TO SADAT, WHICH ALSO ENDORSED REFERENDUM. (COMMENT: THREE ORIGINALLY BELONGED TO CENTER PARTY BUT DEFECTEDTOPROTEST GOVERNMENT REFUSAL GRANT THEM FAVORED TREATMENT ON COTTON.. PRESUMARLY OVERSIGHT HAS BEEN CORRECTED.)

5. SPECIAL PROSECUTOR. PEOPLES ASSEMBLY DIRECTOR OF FOREIGN RELATIONS EL HEFNI TOLD EMBOFF MAY 31 PARLIAMENTARIANS ARE UNCERTAIN HOW TO IMPLEMENT REFERENDUM, PARTICULARLY AS IT RELATES TO ROLE OF SOCIALIST PROSECUTOR. EL HEFNI SAID MATTER CONSIDERED BRIEFLY AT LAST SESSION AND WILL BE ADDRESSED AGAIN ON SATURDAY OR SUNDAY. READING FROM DRAFT LAW, EL HEFNI SAID CURRENT INTENTION IS TO HAVE SOCIALIST PROSECUTOR REFER CASES INVOLVING PARLIAMENTARIANS TOASSEMBLY FOR ADJUDICATION BY MAJORITY VOTE. CASES INVOLVING CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 CAIRO 14095 020934Z

NON-MEMBERS WILL BE FORWARDED TO ASSEMBLY FOR INFORMATION ONLY; OFFENDERS WILL BE TRIED BY SPECIAL COURTS. REGULATIONS FOR TRIALS, AND PENALTIES, HAVE YET TO BE SET.

6. COMENT: FOREIGN PRESS CRITICISM OF RECENT EVENTS TROUBLING SADAT, WHO WAS NOTABLY IRRITATED DURING MAY 30 PRESS CONFERENCE. PRESIDENT REPEATEDLY STRESSED EGYPT NOT ABANDONING DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENT BUT MERELY CORRECTING EXCESSES. SADAT REMINDED JOURNALISTS THAT, INMIDDLE EAST CONTEXT, NO COUNTRY ENJOYS GREATER FREEDOMS THAN THOSE EXERCISED BY EGYPTIANS. SADAT'S SENSITIVITY ON THIS SUBJECT INDICATES ONE OF MAJOR BRAKES ON CRACKDOWN LIKELY BE DEGREE TO WHICH FOREIGN MEDIA CONTINUES FOLLOW DEVELOPMENTS. MATTHEWS

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